

Life After Lockup Stories of Success



Celebrating National Reentry Week, one of our STRIDE graduates, Markus K., participated on a panel of returning citizens presented by the City of Hartford on April 29, 2016 at the Harford Public library. Over one hundred people joined Mayor Luke Bronin, City Council President Thomas J. Clarke II, City Councilman James Sanchez and Department of Correction Commissioner Scott Semple to listen to Tracy, Markus, Bruce, Diego and Edward share their stories of coming home

from incarceration and overcoming the challenges associated from having a record. Kicking off this event was an inspiring performance by the Judy Dworin Performance Project.

Markus, the youngest member of the panel, had recently been released from the Cybulski Community Reintegration Center in Enfield to a halfway house and had begun a culinary training program at Billings Forge provided by the Best Chance program. Markus is looking forward to utilizing his new training to find sustainable employment as he pursues his goals.

While this event highlighted successful reentry, there is still much work that needs to be done to reduce the barriers facing individuals coming home from incarceration. It is our hope that we can continue these community conversations to educate and encourage employers to provide employment opportunities... giving individuals a second chance at a real future.

Submitted by:
Sue Gunderman, STRIDE Job Placement Coordinator

The BEST Chance Program



The BEST Chance Program Pre-Release is up and running at both York Correctional Institution and Cybulski Community Reintegration Center. Classes began on Monday, May 23rd for the women at York and on Tuesday, May 24th for the men at Cybulski. This Pre-Release portion of the program will help them kick start their trade training once released in one of three fields; Culinary Arts, Construction or Advanced Manufacturing. The men and women have agreed to complete a 5-week workshop meeting twice a week with a job readiness curriculum provided by the STRIDE Program. The BEST Chance program is a pilot program funded by the Governor's Second Chance Society Initiative and the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, in partnership with CT Departments of

Labor and Corrections and operated by Capital Workforce Partners. The Program is targeted to offenders returning to the Hartford area, once released they are able to receive support services, transportation assistance, stipends and paid work experience.

For more information on The Best Chance program please visit: www.capitalworkforce.org/bestchance or contact Carmen Arroyo at carroyo@capitalworkforce.org or 860-899-3454.

Submitted by:
Maribel Laureano, I-BEST Career Specialist

5th Annual Bridgeport Reentry Awards



Left to right: Terrell T., Rob Hebert, Reinaldo T., Two Roads Brewing Representative Ted Anderson.

On April 29th STRIDE Job Developer Rob Hebert attended the 5th Annual Bridgeport Re-entry awards ceremony which was held at Housatonic Community College. Guest speakers included Mayor Ganem of Bridgeport as well as DOC Commissioner Scott Semple. STRIDE participants Reinaldo T. and Terrell T. were both given awards for personal achievement. STRIDE also nominated Two Roads Brewing for Community Partner of the Year. It was an inspirational evening filled with hope and numerous stories of success.

P.S. Congratulations Rob for being honored in receiving the 2016 Professional of the year award from the Bridgeport Re-entry council.

Submitted by:
Rob Hebert, STRIDE Job Developer Region II

Striding Forward Corner... Paul



The STRIDE Program begins the day you walk into your first class. In that moment you are entering into a partnership with STRIDE staff and yourself to change your life for the better, to discover a new way of looking at not just employment, but how you do your life. We ask that you take all aspects of your life into consideration so that when you do land that first job or

training opportunity you are ready to show up and do your best. Paul seemed to understand this early on and began to take full advantage of what STRIDE has to offer. Paul sent questions to his soon-to-be Job Developer through his Career Specialist while he was still inside. He took every opportunity to meet with the Career Specialist and Job Developer to talk about his goals and available support services upon release. He was not due for release

until August 2015 but by April 2015 he had already submitted a concise list of personal and professional goals. Nine months after his release Paul has taken time to volunteer, secured a full time position at a local family run bakery and café, now has his own apartment and a motor scooter to get to and from work and has begun the process to reunify with his family. Paul has a love for baking and received his Culinary Arts certification while incarcerated and has now found rewarding work in that same field. While Paul has found a job he loves and has earned the respect of his employers, he continues to think about and revisit his original goals. On his horizons is the goal to finish a college degree in Business Administration at the University of Connecticut. Paul has more than earned the black cap and apron he wears at work. We look forward to Paul's continued success and to receiving that photo of him in a black cap and gown.

Submitted by:
Anne Mehr, STRIDE Program Job Developer Region 1

Would You Like More Information On STRIDE?

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Knowledge Is Power: Research Tips Before The Interview



When preparing for interviews, researching the employer is essential. The more information you gather about a position, company, or industry, the more confidence you will bring into the interview and the less likely you will be caught off guard. Here are ten tips on what to research prior to an interview.

1. What the company looks for in a qualified candidate. Study the job description, look at their career page and if you can, talk to a current or former employee to determine what the employer values most. Position yourself as the best candidate for the position.
2. What products and/or services they offer. You must know what they are selling in order to tailor your responses to best fit the position.
3. The client or customer. Know who the target population is for the company.
4. Basic history of the company: how old they are, where they started and how they have grown.
5. Key employees that run the company or organization. Learn who the company leaders are by looking at their bios from the company website or social media pages.
6. News or recent events involving the employer. Look into their website for their press releases and events page for this information.
7. The company's mission statement, culture and values. You can learn much of this information from their website, but also by following the company on social media.
8. The person interviewing you. If you have no information regarding the interviewer's name, simply contact the company and politely ask for the person's name. Once you acquire their name, research them on LinkedIn, Twitter or Facebook. This will help you learn about their background and also identify common interests you may have with them.
9. The industry. Know other companies that may be competition, and know what makes the company where you are interviewing unique.
10. Yourself. Know what is out there about yourself whether it is from Facebook, Twitter or the newspaper, and be prepared to answer questions about your presence on the internet.

Submitted by:
Sarah Therrien, Career Specialist